AGE CONCERN NZ MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Age Concern and ACC highlight the importance of strength, balance and social connection for older people

Age Concern and ACC are teaming up to ensure that older people in New Zealand are safe and healthy, as well as socially connected.

ACC has been supporting Age Concern’s Steady As You Go falls prevention initiative for more than ten years – and are now working with Age Concern to roll out the programme in both Wanganui and Tauranga.

Age Concern New Zealand Chief Executive Robyn Scott says that she hopes to see the programme available in more communities throughout New Zealand in the future.

Steady as You Go (SAYGO) is a one hour weekly falls prevention programme that focusses on strength and balance, for over 65 year olds living independently in the community.

Falls are a major public health problem for older people. Those over 65 have a one in three chance of falling this year. For people aged 80 and over, the risk increases to one in two.

A fall, even one that does not result in injury can also have damaging consequences. Older people often experience a loss of confidence after a fall and the fear of falling can be debilitating and can lead to a severe restrictions in activity and social interaction.

Steady As You Go addresses all of these issues – helping older people to remain healthy and safe, while providing fantastic opportunities for social connection within the class.

Age Concern supports any work that is undertaken to support older people’s wellbeing – including strength, balance and social connection and ACC has also been working with other partners, as well as Age Concern, to support the wellbeing of older Kiwi’s.

For example, all older people receiving the SuperGold card will now also receive a brochure that puts together advice on staying active and safe, from ACC, the Ministry of Health, Sports New Zealand and the Ministry of Social Development.

Age Concern believes that the SuperGold card is a great tool for helping older people to get out and about in their communities and to remain socially connected. Mrs Scott says that the brochure will hopefully empower older people to use the discounts for walking shoes, fitness activities and healthy food options – which all help older people to be well and live well.

Mrs Scott says that local Age Concerns around New Zealand have plenty on offer for older people’s wellbeing. “Local Age Concerns offer everything from Senior Chef cooking classes,
to confident driving courses, walking groups, Steady As You Go and even life writing classes.”

Mrs Scott says one of the benefits these classes have in common is the ability to offer older people social opportunities, “we are helping older kiwis to be strong, healthy, confident and socially connected.”

ENDS

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